

BEFORE THEY WERE MARRIED.
BY HENRY C. PARKER,
AUTHOR OF
"SCORNED TO THE END,"
"ARBITRATION & C."

250 CENTS
DOLLARS WILL
BE GIVEN FOR A
CORRECT SOLUTION
OF THIS STORY,
BY A WOMAN,
250 CENTS

CONDITIONS OF THE STAR'S GREAT OFFER.

1. The Star will pay \$250 in gold to the reader from whom it receives by mail, at the publication office, Pennsylvania avenue and 11th street, the complete and absolutely correct solution of "Before They Were Married," as it shall be disclosed in the final chapter of the story, to be published Saturday, December 14, in The Star. If two or more complete and absolutely correct solutions are received the \$250 in gold will be divided equally.
2. Should The Star fail to receive a solution that is complete and absolutely correct in all its details, the \$250 in gold will be allotted to the person who has made the most complete and accurate solution nearest to the true solution of the mystery according to the percentage of merit, and the money will be divided as follows:
1st Prize.....\$50.00
2d Prize.....\$25.00
3d Prize.....\$12.50
4th Prize.....\$6.25
5th Prize.....\$3.12
25 Prizes of \$5 each.....\$125.00
- 25 Prizes, aggregating.....\$250.00
3. The first prize of \$250 in gold will be paid for the explanation which comes nearest to the true solution; the second prize of \$50 to the person who has made the most complete and accurate solution nearest to the true solution; the third and fourth prizes, the remaining twenty-five prizes of \$5 each will be awarded to the persons who have made the most complete and accurate solution nearest to the true solution, as the judges may determine their merit.
4. The Star is perpetually a family newspaper and its daily installment of a high grade serial story is a feature intended to especially commend it to the home circle. To emphasize this feature, the Star has decided to publish the story of "Before They Were Married" in daily installments until Saturday, December 7, on which date all but the final chapter will have been published. The interval between Saturday, December 7, and Wednesday, December 11, 6 o'clock p.m., inclusive, will be allowed for forwarding of guesses, and the final chapter will be published in The Star Saturday, December 14. Under consideration whatever will be received from any source and considered prior to Saturday, December 11, for no reason at all.

THIRD INSTALLMENT.

CHAPTER III.—THE DOCTOR'S DIAGNOSIS.

"Unknown, did you say?" asked the doctor, somewhat disconcerted by the professor's aside.

"Well, yes," responded Hawkins, "those that found it didn't know who it was."

"Wasn't there anything about the clothing to identify him? Any papers in the pocket, or any marks upon the person?"

"You ask too many questions for me, doctor. We only heard the rumor as we was starting off, but as for clothing I heard say that the body was mostly naked."

"The body was it found?" asked Professor Drummond.

"Near the beginning of the flume to Waldo's mill, I heard, but I really don't know anything about it. Think it's your friend Starkweather, professor?"

"I can't hold any opinion or another," he replied. "You see, Starkweather and I were at breakfast—" and he proceeded to tell

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the story of the young man's death and disappearance with all the clearness and circumstantiality with which he had discussed the matter with the doctor. Hawkins and Mr. Philbrick listened attentively.

"Of course," concluded the professor, "there was only way out of it. I must have been mistaken in supposing the man dead, and he recovered sufficiently to get away after I came down stairs."

"You think he fell into the river, then?" asked Hawkins.

Professor Drummond shrugged his shoulders.

"I cannot say," he answered, and Dr. Williams noticed how much more self-possessed he was now than formerly. All evidence of the shock to which he had been subjected had left him.

"What became of my servant?" asked the professor, and during which time Hawkins had been examining his wife's hand. Mr. Philbrick was gazing at the mountain miles away beyond the Minkie.

"Give it up, she was powerfully excited."

"What did she say?"

"I don't know," he could fasten to. "Dropped dead," and Professor Drummond and "young man" were about all the words she said, and she didn't get into any sort of order, but he paid no attention.

"What do you think of it, doctor?" asked Hawkins.

"Yes," assented the professor, "I can't understand it."

"I should think," suggested the landlady, "that you'd want to go down to Waldo's and see for yourself if the body found is Starkweather. I haven't a doubt, myself."

The professor looked at her with a look of anxiety to Dr. Williams.

"Do you think I'd better?" he asked.

The young physician flushed.

"I don't see how I could look me," he answered. "What other respectable course is open to us?"

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back and opened his mouth in a silent laugh of derision at the landlady's doctor's side of the ignorant man's tirade, and smiled back. When he went to the dining room the ladies came from the dining room to meet him.

"You can't think how nervous I am, doctor," said Louise, "I tell about it."

The doctor told her substantially what he had told Mr. Philbrick, and reiterated his confidence that all the mysterious features of the case would be cleared up in a way.

"In a moment," irresponsibly, he said, "Mr. Starkweather probably fell or jumped into the river. A body has been found a mile or so below, and he is going down to see if we can identify it."

"Must we stay here?" asked Louise.

"Are you ill, Miss Willis?" exclaimed the doctor, suddenly stopping forward and holding out his hands, for it seemed as if Amelia were about to faint.

"No, no," she responded, with evident effort, and the color rushed back to her face, "it is only that the whole thing seems so terrible. That is all."

Dr. Williams looked apprehensive.

"I'm half inclined to prescribe for you, Miss Willis," he said, "as I did for the professor."

"Don't," she returned, "I'd rather not take anything. I wonder if Uncle Nathan will let us go with him."

"Tell me about papa," said Louise.

"I fear I don't tell you," said the doctor, frankly, "that he had suffered some kind of shock that led to hallucination, but I see no evidence of it now. He is apparently as sound as I am myself."

"I am so relieved! There he is now."

The professor drove around the corner in a carriage full of the stable, which was at the side of the house.

"Papa," called Louise, "may we go with you?"

"Not to be thought of," he returned, shortly.

"Wait here a minute," said the doctor in a low voice to the young ladies. He went down the steps and spoke to the professor.

"I'm sure you'll pardon a seeming interference, but under the circumstances I feel bound to advise you not to leave the ladies here alone. They are badly shaken. Recall your own agitation and then think of them."

"What were they talking to you about?" asked Professor Drummond.

"About our conclusions with reference to Starkweather. They hadn't heard of the body in the river, you know."

"Haven't heard—oh! you thought I meant the girls. I was referring to Hawkins and the other fellow."

There was some acidity characteristic of his outspoken disposition in his tone as he responded.

"Hawkins was for seeing an ugly mystery and Mr. Philbrick pooh-poohed his suspicions. That was all."

"Suspicions, eh? Suspensions of what?"

"I don't know," said Dr. Williams, shortly. "I didn't ask him. I venture to assure you that the young ladies ought not to be left alone at home."

Professor Drummond frowned.

"They can't find anything comforting in a morgue," he said.

"No, but they could stay at my mother's till your return."

"Very well. Get your hats, girls, and hurry," called the professor to the ladies.

The short journey to the village was covered in silence. Professor Drummond was

wrapped in his thoughts and the young ladies were too subdued to say anything.

The doctor could not but infer that they were habitually held in rather severe subjection by the professor. He noticed how much more affected, apparently, by the news of the body found in the river than Louise, Amelia had hardly said a word since the time they had met Betsy. Her face was very pale and her eyes were swollen as with a weeping of tears that she held back by a supreme effort of the will.

Having left Louise and Amelia at Dr. Williams' home, the professor returned to the village. There was no need to inquire where the body of the drowned man was, for he was recognized by villagers, who called to him and told him of his arrival.

"Everybody thinks he knows all about it," muttered Professor Drummond, "and I suppose the wildest tales are current."

The body had been taken to the local undertaker's place of business, about which there was a crowd of morbid curiosity-seekers. The professor went to the undertaker's place and pushed through the crowd to the body of the drowned man, for he was recognized by villagers, who called to him and told him of his arrival.

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MISS FRENCH'S

To the Reading World She is Known
as Octave Thane.

HER INTEREST IN MISS FLAGLER'S CASE

A Star Reporter's Chat With Her
About Her Stories.

HER LITERARY LIFE

Miss Alice French, who, as Octave Thane, is one of the best-known literary women of the country, is paying a visiting tour to the city of Gen. and Mrs. Flagler, the two ladies having been life-long friends. There are few contributors to contemporary literature whose work appeals to a broader field or strikes a truer note in the hearts of the reading public than that of Miss French. Although a resident of Davenport, Iowa, she is a native of Massachusetts, but her literary efforts have been confined for the most part to the reading of her work in the West. Her ancestors for several generations have been engaged in the manufacturing business, and from her long association with factory people comes the sociologic character of so much of her work.

"I have the greatest fondness for the American mechanic and workman," she said to a Star reporter this morning. "The American farmer I do not know so well, but my father was an iron manufacturer, and my brothers are in the business today."

She was graduated at Harvard two years ago, and was there known best, perhaps, by her good looks, her two big dogs and her fast horse. I think his classmate would hardly know him now if they could see him starting out every morning after a 6-o'clock breakfast, dressed in his rough workman's clothes and heading for the rolling mill. His work is that of a "rougher," grasping the white-hot iron bars as they come out from the rollers and turning them back into the furnace to be re-heated and dangerous positions in the mill.

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not the slightest idea. My mother could tell you, but I don't know. How do I work? Hard. That is all I can say about it. I have been a hard worker all my life. I was interested in political economy, if I came across a statement that I did not think was true, I would waste through the whole volume of dry statistics to see whether it could be disproved. My later stories have dealt largely with labor questions, and I have tried to write them from the point of view of one who understands the subject.

Her Nom de Plume.

"How did I come to take the nom de plume of Octave Thane? Well, really that was an accident. I was a little wary of having my identity known in the first place and made up mind to write under a fictitious name. Octave was the name of a school friend of mine. It is both French and Scotch. I thought if I could find an other name to go with it that was both French and Scotch I would adopt that. I was riding on a train one time when we stopped at a way station, and on the siding near where I sat was a freight car painted red. On the side was chalked the name of Octave Thane. I thought, 'I got there I have not the slightest idea, but I decided then and there to adopt it. Lots of people still think that Octave Thane is a name, and frequently get letters like this: 'My dear Mr. Thane. I have read your works and am sure you are a manly man. They usually contain a request for a small loan to repair the new factory. The conversation then took in a number of other literary people and Miss French talked most entertainingly about authors of the time whom she knew. She is a serious and admiring critic. Something was said of Miss Sarah Orne Jewett and her work in the field of fiction. She is a native of England. 'Yes, and how beautifully she does tell her stories,' said Miss French. 'Could anything be truer or more perfect than her pictures of life among the cold, hard, granite hills?' So she spoke of various people whose names are well known in the world of letters and art. There was not one curious word, not the slightest suggestion of professional jealousy. She found something in the works of each to admire."

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